AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a printing system, wherein said printing system comprises at least one printer and at least two user terminals connected to the at least one printer through a network, each said printer having a control unit which receives print jobs from the user terminals and controls processing of these print jobs, the method comprising:

sending, upon a disturbance of a predetermined kind in one of the at least one printer while processing a print job, a warning message relating to said disturbance to at least one of the user terminals;

providing, upon receipt of said warning message, a first alerting signal relating to said disturbance at a predetermined first one of said user terminals;

waiting for a user response to be performed upon the printer; and

providing, if no user response is detected within a predetermined delay time, a second alerting signal relating to the same disturbance at a predetermined other one of the user terminals,

wherein the predetermined delay time is varied.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

sending, if no user response to said first alerting signal is detected within a predetermined delay time, a second warning message relating to said same disturbance to said other one of the user terminals for providing said second alerting signal.

3. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein upon reception of said first warning message, said first user terminal provides said first alerting signal at least in the form of a first acoustic or optical signal for alerting a corresponding user, and upon reception of said second message, the other user terminal provides said second alerting signal at least in the form of a second acoustic or optical signal for alerting a corresponding user.

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4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising:

checking if said disturbance is being or has been looked after;

and if so, not providing said second alerting signal.

5. (Original) The method according to claim 4, wherein a response that causes the second alerting signal to not be provided takes the form of a detection by the control unit of the printer that a signal indicating the removal of the disturbance has been input.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising:

checking, in a user terminal, if said first warning message relates to a disturbance of a predetermined kind;

and, if so, in said first one of the user terminals, providing a first alerting signal for alerting the user substantially upon receipt of said first warning message, and

in said other one of the user terminals, providing a second alerting signal for alerting the user after a predetermined time interval.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6, further comprising:

checking if said disturbance is being or has been looked after;

and if so, not providing said second alerting signal.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein a response that causes the second alerting signal to not be provided takes the form of a detection by the control unit of the printer that a signal indicating the removal of the disturbance has been input.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said first one of the user terminals submitted a print job in the course of which said disturbance occurred.

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10. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said other one of the user terminals is a user terminal of a key operator.

11. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said alerting signal comprises a message on the display screen of the user terminal.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined kind of disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined kind of disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing a print job.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined kind of disturbance comprises non-availability of staples needed for processing a print job.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined kind of disturbance comprises a paper jam during processing of a print job.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined kind of disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.

17. (Currently Amended) For connection to a network having at least two user terminals, a printer comprising:

a printing unit; and

a control unit, connected to said network and said printing unit, which receives print jobs from the user terminals and controls how the printing unit processes said print jobs,

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wherein the control unit, upon a disturbance of a predetermined kind, sends a first warning message relating to said disturbance to a predetermined first one of the user terminals; and

wherein, if no user response is received within a predetermined delay time, the control unit sends a second warning message relating to said same disturbance to a predetermined other one of the user terminals, wherein the predetermined delay time is varied.

18. (CurrentlyAmended) The ~~printing system~~ printer according to claim 17, wherein said first warning message is for causing a first acoustic or optical signal for alerting a user to be provided at said first one of the user terminals and wherein said second warning message is for causing a second acoustic or optical signal for alerting another user to be provided at said other one of the user terminals.

19. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said first one of the user terminals is a user terminal having submitted a print job in which said disturbance occurred.

20. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said other one of the user terminals is a user terminal of a key operator.

21. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said signal for alerting the user comprises a message on the display screen of the pertinent user terminal.

22. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

23. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing a print job.

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24. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises non-availability of staples needed for processing a print job.

25. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a paper jam during processing of a print job.

26. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.

27. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein a user response that causes the second warning signal to not be generated takes the form of a detection that a confirmation signal for signalling the removal of the disturbance has been input at the printer.

28. (Original) The printer according to claim 17, wherein a user response that causes the second warning signal to not be generated takes the form of a detection that said disturbance is being or has been looked after

29. (Currently Amended) For connection to a network having at least one printer, each printer having a control unit which receives print jobs from user terminals on said network and controls the processing of these print jobs by the printer, and wherein the control unit, upon a disturbance of said processing of a print job, sends a warning message relating to said disturbance onto said network, a printing system comprising:

a first remote user interface on said network; and

a second remote user interface on said network;

wherein each of said first and second remote user interfaces include:

means for checking if said warning message relates to a disturbance of a predetermined kind; and

means for generating an acoustic or optical signal for alerting a user of one of said remote user interfaces; and

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wherein, upon reception of a warning message of said predetermined kind:

said first remote user interface generates a first signal relating to said disturbance for alerting the corresponding user substantially upon receipt of and in response to said warning message; and

said second remote user interface generates a second signal relating to said same disturbance for alerting the user in response to and at a predetermined time after receiving said warning message, wherein the predetermined time is varied.

30. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said second user interface includes means for detecting a status of said printer and, upon detection that said disturbance is being or has been looked after, does not generate said second signal for alerting the user.

31. (Original) The printing system according to claim 30, wherein a response that causes the second signal for alerting the user to not be generated takes the form of detection that a confirmation signal for signalling the removal of the disturbance has been input at the printer.

32. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said first user interface is a user interface having submitted a print job in which said disturbance occurred.

33. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said other user interface is a user interface of a key operator.

34. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said signal for alerting the user comprises a message on a display screen.

35. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a disturbance that can be removed by an operator.

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36. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises non-availability of recording sheets needed for processing a print job.

37. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises non-availability of staples needed for processing a print job.

38. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a paper jam during processing of a print job.

39. (Original) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein said predetermined disturbance comprises a situation in which an output-receiving tray is full.

40. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined delay time is varied based on key operator or user preferences.

41. (New) The method according to claim 1, wherein the predetermined delay time is varied dynamically based on system time.

42. (New) The printer according to claim 17, wherein the predetermined delay time is varied based on key operator or user preferences.

43. (New) The printer according to claim 17, wherein the predetermined delay time is varied dynamically based on system time.

44. (New) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein the predetermined time is varied based on key operator or user preferences.

45. (New) The printing system according to claim 29, wherein the predetermined time is varied dynamically based on system time.